



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

"The question arises, has this vast catastrophe occurred before or after the creation of man? According to the opinion of our naturalists the inquiry is perfectly useless. They are all convinced that the revolution which destroyed the monstrous animals took place before man's advent, and they support their opinions by the circumstance that no anthropoliths (petrifications of man), are to be found. Recent discoveries have raised great doubts on this subject. There is one circumstance which must not be overlooked. Animals are more fettered by certain conditions, especially limited as they are to certain kinds of food. A beast of prey, though driven by hunger, cannot live on plants, nor will an elephant consume animal food. The sudden change of external conditions rendered the extinction of these animals imperative. Not so with man. Just as at present, he can live in every climate, and feed on animals or plants, so could he then. He had also the power of saving himself from destruction by ascending the hills. We must, therefore, not wonder if human bones are very rare. I take it to be a fact that the human race existed before the great catastrophe which destroyed a gigantic vegetation and monstrous mammals."

In conclusion, we have only again to express our high sense of the value of Sir Charles Lyell's book, and our pleasure that it has already reached a second edition.

WILSON'S PRE-HISTORIC MAN.*

Dr. WILSON is known by his *Pre-Historic Annals of Scotland*, published some years ago. He was a practised archæologist, familiar with the antiquities of Great Britain, before he accepted a professorship in University College, Toronto. A full acquaintance with a well-worked field in the Old World was, of course, a most useful introduction to the study of American Ethnology, and his previous experience gives him the power, often wanting among American antiquaries, of explaining and classing facts by reference to the archæology of other regions.

It is, however, most unfortunate that Dr. Wilson should have undertaken in his present work a task more fitted for the crowning labour of such a life as Humboldt's, than for the occupation of the leisure hours of an antiquary, whose solid basis of knowledge consists only in a familiarity with the archæology of Great Britain, and of that

* *Pre-Historic Man; Researches into the Origin of Civilization in the Old and the New World.* By Daniel Wilson, LL.D., Cambridge. London: Macmillan, 1862.

part of North America which lies above the tropics. As to Mexico, Central America, and South America, he mostly compiles from well-known authors, and though his observations are often highly amusing and instructive, they are not what so important a subject demands, the well-digested opinions of a student thoroughly acquainted with all that has been already done by workers in the same field.

The first volume contains (chapter viii) the best description we have met with of the ancient workings of the native copper veins of Lake Superior, drawn from personal investigation as well as books. Dr. Wilson demolishes the notion, so often entertained in America, that the old copper-workers had some other means of hardening tools of native copper than hammering them, and describes well the simple processes they must have employed by cracking the rock by fire, and getting the copper clear by beating with stone hammers. It is to be observed that he believes the greater copper-workings to have been done, not by the present race of Indians, but probably by the extinct race known as the Mound-Builders, who have left remains so remarkable for size, symmetry, and number, in the valleys of the Mississippi and its tributaries. These mound-builders Dr. Wilson discusses at length, drawing his information, of course, for the most part, from Squier and Davis, in vol. i of the *Smithsonian Contributions*, and attacking energetically the theory supported by some American antiquaries, as, for example, Schoolcraft, who thus sums up his opinion on this subject at the end of his great work: "The mound-builders were the ancestors of the existing Indian race. The theory of there having been prior races of superior civilization and arts, has no countenance from examinations made in his work" (Part III, p. 393). Dr. Wilson's view is exactly contrary to this, and we think the best of the argument is on his side. He dwells upon the importance of their earthworks used for defence and worship, so different from their mean representatives among the modern Indians; the accuracy of their squares and circles in works many acres in area; the curious correspondence of their dimensions in different parts of the country, which makes it likely, though not certain, that they had a unit of measurement; their remarkable sacrificial system; the extraordinary excellence of their characteristic pipe sculpture, etc.

When Dr. Wilson quits the beaten track of Squier and Davis, and strikes into a new path of his own, he gets, in one instance at least, upon what seems to us very unsafe ground. Certain copper bracelets occur in a mound, which Squier and Davis describe (p. 204-5) as "of uniform size and weight," and which "weigh four ounces each,"

and Dr. Wilson says that they "when perfect weigh exactly four ounces each. This becomes a proof to his mind that the mould-builders knew the art of weighing, which even the Aztecs did not possess. At least in vol. ii, p. 453, he sets down, on the strength of this, "standard weights," as known to the inhabitants of North America. The assumption seems to us to rest on no sure foundation, at least so far as Dr. Wilson gives the data. The bracelets appear to have belonged to one person, so that there is nothing very surprising in their being pretty nearly alike; but Dr. Wilson does not give the weight in grains, and the even quantity, four ounces, shows how rough the observation is. He may have formed his opinion upon more accurate evidence than this, but, if so, this evidence should have been given.

We find Dr. Wilson repeating the usual statement in describing the evidences of commerce with distant parts found in the mound-builders' tumuli; "objects formed from the mica of the Alleghanies, and the native copper of Lake Superior, mingling with others made of the obsidian of Mexico, or modelled from tropical fauna of the southern continent" (vol. i, p. 223). The latter important point is treated at p. 476, etc., but we think does not rest on sufficient evidence; and the same objection holds as to the "obsidian of Mexico," which might be supposed to prove intercourse, direct or indirect, between the mound-builders and the Mexicans. But obsidian is not only found but used by the natives for weapons, etc., in other places on the Continent, and why may not this obsidian have come from Northern California or Oregon?

The chapters in this work headed "The American Cranial Type" and "Artificial Cranial Distortion" are verbose, superficial, and unsatisfactory. It is difficult to give any intelligible account of the wilderness of undigested facts which are comprised in the hundred and twenty-five weary pages on the subject. Suffice it to say, that we have carefully examined Dr. Wilson's compilation, and fail to perceive either a single new fact, or a single old one placed in an intelligible and instructive form. Moreover, it is but too evident that the author has not taken care to render himself familiar with the best authorities on the subject. He adopts the careless and inaccurate observations of Mr. J. H. Blake, and gives a figure of a skull (p. 242) which he terms a "well proportioned symmetrical skull, unaltered by any artificial appliances." This skull appears to us merely an example of Foville's *tête annulaire*, and undoubtedly due to circular-constriction behind the coronal suture. The manner in which the

logician's *suggestio falsi* is made use of by Dr. Wilson, to induce general readers to believe that the theory that the American aborigines are referable to two distinct cranial types—the brachy- and dolichocephalic—was arrived at by Mr. J. H. Blake as an original observation, we consider very much to be deplored. The theory was originated by Morton, but was left to be intelligibly propounded by Retzius. The whole subject of the distortion of Peruvian crania has been sufficiently ventilated of late years: and the supererogatory attention which Dr. Wilson has paid to the subject can, we think, only be attributable to an excess of leisure on his part, which is most unprofitably spent in the two chapters before us.

The chapters on the Mixture of Indian and White Blood are of great interest to the anthropologist. Dr. Wilson utterly repudiates the idea of the half-breeds being an example of the weakness and non-permanence of mixed races; and he gives an account of their physical and moral excellences, which the advocates of the opposite view of such races have to answer. It is true that these half-breeds are not likely to form a permanent race; but this arises, in Dr. Wilson's opinion, from no want of productiveness, but simply from their gradual absorption into the general population of the country. We do not go further into the discussion of Dr. Wilson's anthropological opinions, which we hope will be examined by special students.

We have complained of Dr. Wilson's discussing various important topics without a proper knowledge of existing materials. For instance, a dissertation on museums of Mexican antiquities (vol. ii, p. 94, etc.) contains no mention of the great Uhde collection, now at Berlin, the finest in the world except that of Mexico itself. A discussion of the mysterious question, "Who were the builders of the ruined cities of Central America?" ought to have contained at least some reference to the remarkable legends published by the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg; and it is of little use to argue at the present day about the origin and history of the Aztecs, without the aid of one of the very most important pieces of evidence we possess on this difficult subject, Professor Buschmann's researches on the traces of the Aztec language far up into the interior of North America.

We find with astonishment, a mention of "Letters" as known to the ancient inhabitants of Central America (vol. ii, p. 453). This must, we suppose, refer to the remarkable figures, often spoken of as "hieroglyphics", in the Central American sculptures. Any one who looks at the description of these sculptures in vol. ii, chap. xix, or studies the plates in Stephens for half an hour, may know as much as

Dr. Wilson or any one else knows about the matter, and will at least wonder at the power of imagination which has enabled him to lay it down that they are "hieroglyphic holophrasms" and "letters"!

Dr. Wilson is very unfortunate in his philology. He adopts the popular derivation of the name of the *manatí*, or cow-fish, from Spanish *mano*, a hand, as though meaning "the fish with hands", without stopping to inquire by what process of Spanish etymology *manatí* could be made from *mano*. The word is really a Carib one, and is given as *manattoüi* in Raymond Breton. He regards the word *kona*, which is said to mean "woman" in Greenlandish as well as in Old Norse, as "a clearly recognized trace" of the presence of the Norsemen in Greenland. Now, though Egede gives the word *kona* in his *Dictionary*, he marks it as not genuine Greenlandish; and, if it were genuine, it would not be safe to say, without further evidence, that it was anything more than an accidental coincidence.

"One swallow does not make a summer", is one of the fundamental principles of philology. Chapter iii of the first volume is on speech; and in it the author's exaggerated idea of the range of imitative words in language leads him into some very astonishing statements. If horses say *htor*, and cows *ehe*, and serpents *hoff*, we can only say that the popular idea of their voices is grossly wrong. A glance at Pictet's *Origines Indo-Européennes* would dispel Dr. Wilson's delusive idea that the name of the beaver has anything to do with any imitation of its voice; and there are other things in the chapter as objectionable as these.

While acknowledging the value of Dr. Wilson's personal observations, and the number of useful details which he has collected and arranged, it is necessary to say that he is by no means a guide to be followed blindfold, and that only those students who have the opportunity of sifting the good from the bad are likely to receive much benefit from his present work.
